

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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-- This is a continuation of PCT/IL99/00444, filed August 17, 1999, which claims priority from U.S. Pat. Application No. 09/161,659, filed September 29, 1998 (abandoned), which is a continuation in part of U.S. Pat. Application No. 09/130,367, filed August 7, 1998 (abandoned), which is a continuation in part of U.S. Pat. Application No. 09/024,195, filed February 17, 1998 (abandoned). In addition, PCT/IL99/00444 claims priority from PCT/US99/02664, filed February 8, 1999, which claims priority from U.S. Pat. Application Nos. 09/024,195 and 09/30,367. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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#-The present invention is ~~of~~ directed to methods of controlling proliferation and/or modulating differentiation of stem and progenitor cells, which can be used to provide a therapeutical *ex-vivo* cultured cell preparation which includes a large population of cells, in which differentiation was inhibited while cell expansion was propagated, and which can alternatively be used to induce cell differentiation. Specifically, the present invention can be used, on one hand, to provide expanded populations of stem cells, as well as progenitor cells, which can be used for, for example, hematopoietic cell transplantations, or the generation of stem or progenitor cells suitable for genetic manipulations, which may be used for gene therapy, and new treatment means for diseases, such as, but not limited to, β -hemoglobinopathia, or alternatively, the present invention can be used to provide a large population of differentiated cells, which can be used, for example, for cell transplantations and for genetic manipulations, which may be used for gene therapy. #